



# State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
DIVISION OF OIL, GAS AND MINING

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April 24, 2001

TO: Internal File

FROM: Paul B. Baker, Reclamation Biologist and Project Team Lead

RE: Deletion of Test Plot Monitoring Requirements, Canyon Fuel Company, LLC, Soldier Canyon Mine, C/007/018-AM01A

## SUMMARY:

In a proposal received April 2, 2001, Canyon Fuel Company is proposing to delete the monitoring requirements for the test plots at the Soldier Canyon Mine. These test plots were established early in the Coal Regulatory Program and have demonstrated that reclamation is feasible at the Soldier Canyon Mine.

## TECHNICAL ANALYSIS:

## RECLAMATION PLAN

## REVEGETATION

Regulatory Reference: 30 CFR Sec. 785.18, 817.111, 817.113, 817.114, 817.116; R645-301-244, -301-353, -301-354, -301-355, -301-356, -302-280, -302-281, -302-282, -302-283, -302-284.

## Analysis:

### Field Trials

There are three sets of test plots at the Soldier Canyon Mine. They are on the topsoil stockpile near the sediment pond, adjacent to the county road near the upper fan, and by the sewage lagoons. These test plots were established in 1982 and 1984 at a time when the Division had limited reclamation experience and was unsure how well various reclamation methods and substitute topsoil would work.

TECHNICAL MEMO

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Unfortunately, crested wheatgrass was used in the seed mixtures with several other species rather than being tried separately. Crested wheatgrass is an introduced aggressive, though otherwise somewhat desirable, species, and it dominates all three sites. In hindsight, it would have been better to seed crested wheatgrass on separate plots from the other species so it would be easier to tell how well the native species would grow. In spite of this problem, the test plots have shown that reclamation is feasible on the substitute soils available for reclamation at the Soldier Canyon Mine.

Results of monitoring the test plots are included in previous years' annual reports. The Division agrees with the applicant that the test plots are not likely to yield additional useful information and that monitoring should be discontinued.

**Findings:**

Information provided in the application is adequate to meet the requirements of this section of the regulations.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

The amendment can be accepted in its present form.